



Advocates for people with Intellectual disabilities
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March 4, 2009

Testimony before Committee on Transportation
Re: S.B. #428 (Committee), "An Act Concerning The Safety of
Individuals Being Transported by State Agencies"

by
Lynn Warner, Executive Director/The Arc of Connecticut

Senator DeFronzo, Representative Guerrero, and Members of the
Transportation Committee:

I am Lynn Warner, Executive Director of The Arc of Connecticut, a 57-year-old statewide advocacy organization for individuals with intellectual disabilities and their families. We have 23 local chapters that provide supports, services, and advocacy for individuals with intellectual disabilities throughout Connecticut.

The Arc of Connecticut is here today to testify in support of **Senate Bill #428, "(Committee), "An Act Concerning The Safety of Individuals Being Transported by State Agencies,** as it directly impacts some of the most vulnerable citizens in Connecticut – who rely on the care of others to keep them healthy, safe and secure.

David Segall was being transported back to the Lower Fairfield Regional Center after winning two gold medals at a Special Olympics Event in May 1999. He was happy and excited and ready to share his awards with his friends and family. But the person placed in charge of taking care of David didn't have knowledge of how to seatbelt him in correctly and didn't have experience driving the van. *What he did have* was a suspended license and a warrant for his arrest.

The Arc/Connecticut, Inc. Member Chapters: Futures, Inc., Middletown / Greater Enfield Arc / Family Options, Watertown / Arc of Farmington Valley / Friends of New Milford, Inc. / Litchfield County Arc / LOV-Arc, Westbrook / MARC, Inc., Manchester / MARC: Community Resources, Portland / Arc of Meriden-Wallingford / Arc of Greater New Haven / Arc/New London County / Options, Unlimited / Arc of Plainville / Arc of Quinebaug Valley / SARAH Inc., Guilford / SARAH Seneca Residential Services / SARAH Tuxis Residential Services / STAR, Norwalk / Arc of Southington / Tri County Arc, Columbia / Waterbury Arc / WeCAHR, Danbury

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David never made it back to the Regional Center that day to share his awards with anyone. David's van was involved in a terrible traffic accident and as a result of not being seat belted properly – he spent six weeks in intensive care in Norwalk and eventually died from the complications he received from his accident – leaving his family and friends heartbroken.

Senate Bill #428 is designed to keep people like David safe and secure. It is not unreasonable to expect the people charged with the responsibility of keeping vulnerable people safe while transporting them to have a driver's license that is in full force and effect – without moving violations or similar infractions. Nor is it unreasonable for the state to periodically review the driving records of such employees. This requirement alone *may* have kept David with his friends and family.

And finally, **Senate Bill #428** makes the state responsible to conduct inspections on its vehicles to ensure all safety equipment functions properly. Again – this is certainly not unreasonable, but more like common sense.

We thank you for raising Senate Bill #428 and we urge you to vote favorably on it. We believe that it outlines the necessary and reasonable components required to keep individuals with disabilities – like David – safe and secure while being transported.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today.